(b) whether Government also imported all the said items during the last three years; if so, the quantity and value thereof, item-wise; and

(c) the names of the countries from which these were imported?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The total quantity and value of onion, potato, vegetables, fruits, oilseeds, pulses, wheat and rice exported during the last three years are as under:

Detials of country-wise exports, quantity and value, are available in the monthly and annual publications of the statistics published by DGCI&S, Calcutta, which are available in the Parliament Library.

(b) Yes, Sir. The total quantity and value of onion, potato, vegetables, fruits, oilseeds, pulses, wheat and rice imported during the last three years are as follows:

Qty: MT
Value: Rs. crores

Item	1995-96		1996-97		1997-98 (Prov.)	
	Qty	Value	Qty	Value	Qty	Value
Onion	-	-	-	-	1641	1.25
Potatoes	3126	0.04	773	0.30	5892	8.25
Vegetbale	NA	24.16	NA	51.33	NA	121.32
Fruits, fresh	NA	328.44	NA	455.26	NA	569.64
Oilseeds	5482	39.23	3693	6.94	1593	4.33
Pulses	485644	685.57	654788	890.34	997967	1142.68
Wheat	8240	10.39	612676	403.76	1372566	988.98
Rice (other than basmati)	80	0.05	2	0.02	495	0.37

(Source : DGCI&S Calcutta)

(c) The names of the major countries from which onion, potato, vegetbale, fruits, oilseeds, pulses, wheat and rice were imported are as under:

Item	Major Countries
1. Onion	Myanmar
2. Potato	Australia, Bhutan, Iran, Myanmar, Turkey, UK & USA
3. Vegetables	Australia, Canada, Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, Iran, Korea, RP, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailanad, Turkey, UK & USA
4. Fruits	Afghanistan, Australia, China, Iran, Mayanmar, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates, U.K. and USA
5. Oilseeds	Afghanistan, Belgium, China, Ghana, Gautemala, Indonesia, Italy, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherland, Pakistna, Republic of Zaire
6. Pulses	Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, Hungary, Iran, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mexico, Nepal, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey, U.K.
7. Wheat	Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Indonesia and Syria.
8. Rice	Australia, Bangladesh, Republic of Korea, Nepal, Netherlands and Singapore.

Proposals for amending the Labour Laws

*8. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering certain proposals for amending the labour laws in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the proposed legislation would be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): (a) to (c) Review and updation of Labour Laws is a continuous process and amendment/fresh legislation are made depending on the result of the review. A number of labour laws have been enacted from time to time to address various aspects of labour which include Freedom of Asssociation and Trade Unions Rights, conditions of work, Minimum Wages, Social security, Labour relations, migrant workers, forced labour, Child labour, equal remuneration for women for same or similar nature of work etc.

There is always a need to review comprehensively the labour laws so as to ensure consistency of labour laws with the changes taking place in the economic and social policies and also to provide for health, safety and well-being of the workers. Therefore, it is not feasible at this stage to indicate a fixed time frame to introduce legislation regarding the amendments.

Tribal Status to Gaddies and Gujjars of Himachal Pradesh

*9 SHRIMATI CHANDRESH KUMARI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleaed to state:

(a) whether Government have been requested to grant tribal status to the Gaddies and Gujjars of the merged areas of Himachal Pradesh;

(b) whether these requests also include declaration of Trans Giri areas as Tribal areas in District Sirmour of Himachal Pradesh on the lines of adjoining areas of Uttar Pradesh, already declared as Tribal;

(c) whether Government have taken any action on these requests;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) to (e) The proposal for declaration of Gaddies & Gujjar of merged area as Scheduled Tribes is under examination. Trans Giri area of Sirmour district of Himachal Pradesh is not eligible for its declaration as tribal area for want of preponderance of Scheduled Tribe population.

Protection to Indigenous Steel Industry

*10. SHRI SITARAM KESRI: Will the Ministery of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the indigenous production of steel has been adversely affected due to the import of steel;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to review its policy of importing steel; and

(c) if not, how Government propose to protect the indigenous indutry from further loss in production?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK): (a) During 1997-98, the production of finished steel was 23.37 million tonnes showing an increase of 2.8% over the previous year. However, cheaper imports of some materials have been affecting domestic sales of finished steel items.

(b) and (c) Government has not reduced import duty on steel items in the last 2 years to help Indian steel industry to adjust to lowered tariff rates in the past. To protect the domestic steel industry, an anti dumping duty has recently been recommended on Hot Rolled Coils/Strips/Plates/boiler quality plates imported from Ukraine and Russia.

Streamlining of Air Cargo Operations

*11. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Ministry of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Expert Committee set up by his Ministry to study streamlining of air cargo operations has submitted its report;

(b) if so, what are the findings thereof; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Group constituted under Federation of Indian Export Organisation (FIEO) has concluded that the main causes of high dwell time at Airports are infrastructure constraints and complicated procedures. The Group has